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*The Creation of Man by the Triune God, and
his Prerogatives defined.*

A
S E R M O N
PREACHED
AT THE
NEW JERUSALEM TEMPLE,
IN RED-CROSS-STREET,
NEAR CRIPPLEGATE, LONDON,
October 12, 1794=38,
ON GENESIS I. 26, 27.

AND GOD SAID, LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE, AFTER
OUR LIKENESS: AND LET THEM HAVE DOMINION
OVER THE FISH OF THE SEA, AND OVER THE FOWL OF
THE AIR, AND OVER THE CATTLE, AND OVER ALL THE
EARTH, AND OVER EVERY CREEPING THING THAT
CREEPETH UPON THE EARTH. SO GOD CREATED MAN IN
HIS OWN IMAGE, IN THE IMAGE OF GOD CREATED HE
HIM: MALE AND FEMALE CREATED HE THEM.

BY MANOAH SIBLY, N.H.S. *K*
AND SERVANT OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

London

PRINTED BY R. HINDMARSH,

PRINTER TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES,
OLD-BAILEY.

And Sold by the AUTHOR, No. 35, Goswell-street; at the
Temple, Red-Cross-street; and by all Booksellers
in Town and Country.

1796=40.



SERMON I.
THE CREATION OF MAN
BY THE TRIUNE GOD,
AND HIS PREROGATIVES DEFINED.

GENESIS I. 26, 27.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them.

HAD we no other criterion to judge of the divinity of the Word but it's natural stile, we should most certainly here find ourselves at a loss, many human com-

positions appearing more elegantly expressed, and more grand in their literal and even grammatical view. Of this our text before us is sufficient proof, for herein all scientific grammatical rules are turned aside; so that every common capacity cannot help seeing the force of the observation, when he attentively peruses the two verses I have chosen for our present meditation.

Before I enter upon the subject, give me leave to premise, by way of substantiating the honour and dignity of the Word, and the glory of it's Author, a reason why the Word is thus written in this apparently simple and rude stile. It is not to be supposed, that the inspired penmen did not know the elegancies and the graces of language, that they did not understand their common grammar rules—no—the diction of the Word springs from a more sublime ground, it is high as heaven, and deep as hell; yea, could we but penetrate to it's inmost bosom, to it's heart, life, and center, there we should behold nothing but the Lord himself in glorified human form; the
essence

essence of the Word, whose resplendent divine human lustre would be seen alone, all coverings being removed.

As the Word has the Lord himself alone for it's center and essence, so in it's divine proceedings it treats of the things constituted to make all his creatures happy and wise; which glorious contents of the Word, as received by angelic hosts above, and the regenerate below, is love and wisdom divine; but as perverted, is lust and insanity infernal. From this ground the Word first treats wholly of the Lord, and then of his kingdom in the heavens and in the earths, and it's opposite, which are it's internal, spiritual, and celestial senses, existing in the natural. Consequently the natural takes such a ground as holds the others in it's bosom. Hence the natural stile and diction of the Word is as it were forced to give up it's apparent elegancies and graces, that the internal of the Word, it's life and soul, may not be lost; the natural becoming such a body as shall hold the soul in it's due connection and series.

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Thus, however mean and contemptible the Word may appear in the eyes of the man filled with the pride of his own conceit, and his own wisdom, herefrom he may know, will he but elevate his mind to the subject, that the Word as far surpasses all human compositions, as the heavens surpass the earth, as the eternal and infinite Jehovah surpasses the creature of a day: he will see divinity itself enstampt upon the Word, and which ought to beget in his mind a reverential awe towards it. The Lord himself is the composer, and where we see the letter not so strictly pure in grammar or elegance of language, let us use the means to know the cause, which is abundantly in our power if we enter into it's internal glories: but let us be careful we do it with hearts elevated to the Lord the God of the Word, a heart disposed to put our knowledges into practice; for it is now allowable (the Lord having commenced his New Jerusalem dispensation in the world) for man to enter into the heretofore incomprehensible mysteries of the Word, and thereby learn his duty to his

his God and neighbour from heaven's internal light.

To apply what has been said to the words of our text. In the first place we read, *And God said*; the Hebrew word *Elohim* being in the plural number, strictly meaning *Gods*; but we find the verb joined thereto *said*, being in the singular, *he said*, *the Gods he said*. We further read, *let us make man in our image, after our likeness*; and then afterward, *so God created man in his own image*. It also says, *let us make man*, (*Adam*) in the singular number, and immediately the plural number is used, *and let THEM have dominion*. We also find the appearance in the last part of our text, as if both man and woman were created together on this self same sixth day of the creation; yet afterwards in the following chapter, after the Lord has been represented as resting on the seventh day from all his work, he is there represented (not creating, but) making, or as it should be rendered, building a woman out of one of the man's ribs,

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My dear friends, do not suppose that I have enumerated these apparent inconsistencies in the literal part of our text, in order in the least to depreciate the glories and the divine authority of the sacred scriptures; far be it from me: I have already spoken on the subject, and have only now to add, that the Word is thus externally written, that the internal may be preserved entire, and that men may not suffer their minds to abide forever in the letter, which, as the apostle observes, killeth, but may arise to the spirit which maketh alive, because, as our Lord truly observes of his words, *they are spirit and they are life.*

These observations also shew the slender bottom such rest their faith upon, who confirm doctrines from the mere grammatical expression in the letter of the Word; as, for instance, has been done by some in calling in the aid of our text, as a confirming proof of the doctrine of three distinct divine persons in the Godhead from eternity, because they therein read, *let us make man in OUR image*; whereas, would they have

have impartially considered the whole of the connection, have gone on to the next verse, *so God created man in HIS own image*, they might have seen the divine trinity in the Lord swallowed up and included in one.

The same doctrine of the trinity of persons in the Deity, has also been supported, more especially among the learned of the day, from the ground that *Elohim*, the word usually translated God, is in the plural number in the original Hebrew; which as it is the word used by inspiration in our text for God, in it's several places, I will beg leave to make a remark upon this particular. As a member of the New Jerusalem, I wish not to take from this word it's force of being in the plural number: as such, it must have relation to a trinity at least, the Hebrew having a particular distinct form whereby they express duality.

But as, in order to see the force of any proposition, much more of a single word, it is absolutely necessary to take it in it's

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connection, so let us come fairly to the point here, and see whether in that view it at all warrants the idea of three distinct persons. We always find it joined in construction with a word in the singular number, except in those instances where the word *Elohim* is used for false gods, where in about eight or nine places it may be found joined in a plural construction, and in no other case whatever. Thus when it says in our text, *and Elohim (Gods)*, it does not add, *they said*, as would certainly be the case did the Word wish to inculcate that the trinity in Jehovah was a trinity of distinct and separate persons. On the contrary, the very form of the expression gives us to see plainly that this trinity, this *Elohim (Gods)* is included fully in one person, for he immediately adds, *he said*. The construction is the same in every part of the Word, where treating of the true God and eternal life; beyond the shadow of a doubt importing, that this trinity should be sought after, and may be found centering in one person, and one person alone.

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As a fuller confirmation, we will turn to Gen. i. 1, *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* The same word is there used as in our text, which, if literally and strictly translated, would read (*Elohim*) Gods he created. Do we seek to find who this one person is, in whom the trinity is found, we may be fully informed thereof in the first of John, where speaking of this very subject of creation we are told of the Word, who was with God, which God was, and who was made flesh: *That all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* And then compare these with Isa. xlv. 24, *Thus saith the Lord thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens ALONE, that spreadeth abroad the heavens by MYSELF.*

Let any impartial unprejudiced mind take all these three scriptures into one view, the plain inference drawn from them must be, that the *I* who stretcheth

forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself, is the (Elohim) Creator in Genesis; and as he did this *alone* and by *himself*, the trinity implied by the word Elohim must be in this one Lord and Saviour. And if we want further evidence of the person, John declares it to be God who was the Word, that was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

Having thus settled the point who and what we are to understand by the God in our text, expressed by the Hebrew word Elohim as connected with a singular word, we now come to what may be implied in the predication itself: *Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*

From what has been already said it
must

must have appeared evident, that the New Church wants not to shrink from a trinity, but wishes to inculcate such a trinity as is agreeable to sound reason, consistent with the Word, which in a thousand places declares the unity of God, both in essence and in person. With respect to what may have been the dogmas of former times, we have nothing to do. The period is now arrived when men will search for themselves, as to matters of faith. The Lord does not call us to act a blind faith, but to knowledge and holiness. He calls us to love, to acknowledge, and consequently to know the God we worship. Without this all our zeal, our faith, our love, yea all our religion, may be enthusiasm. The knowledge of the Lord is the first door to heaven.

As the New Church acknowledges but one Jehovah God, so she acknowledges the trinity, in all the fulness of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to be in him. He is the Father as the incomprehensible esse, to whom no mortal can approach in
heaven

heaven and in earth; the Son as the form and existence of that esse; and the Holy Spirit as the divine proceeding of both. Thus in allusion to this trinity in Jehovah God from eternity, he could say, *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.* And because this trinity is to be found in the one person of Jehovah of the Old Testament, who became the Jesus of the New, therefore it is afterwards said, *So God created man in HIS own image, in the image of God created HE him.*

The common idea of these words, *and God said, let us make man in OUR image, after our likeness,* has been, that they bear relation to one person of the trinity, either then as from eternity having assumed a human soul, or in expectation of taking one into it's hypostatic union (as it is expressed) with himself, and that this is what is meant by *our image* and *our likeness*. But certainly these ideas cannot be confirmed from this text without detaching it from it's connection,

nection, or giving it a forced construction; *let us make man in our image; so God created man in his own image.* It certainly appears from the connection of the passage, that the whole of the trinity in the one God was of the same image. Indeed this is the real and genuine truth: in the incomprehensible esse, Jehovah is the Man; but he has been so seen by none but the Son, and those to whom the Son shall reveal him. And therefore God was manifested in flesh as a man, and has ascended to heaven's glory in the same form, of a man, in which he was seen in the world. That this was always the form of the Deity, and that he existed in that form whilst in first principles alone, before the assumption of humanity, our text sufficiently vouches, when it says, that man was made in his image, and in his likeness; and all which proceeds from him is in the same form. That the divine proceeding, the spirit of truth and love, is in the same form, we ourselves are living monuments, being the bounds of the divine proceeding; and it proceeds that

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we may grow up as men, more and more images and likenesses of our Maker. Paul seems to allude to this, when he tells us we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son; the Son being the form and existence of the Father, as united in the one person of the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We now come to speak to the distinguishing superiority with which man is endowed, in comparison to the rest of the creation. *Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.* The meaning of which in it's natural sense is, that man is the lord of all creation, the chief of all God's works; he alone being created in the nearest image and likeness of God, all other creatures being images and likenesses of man. He has the natural dominion, because he has the spiritual dominion; man alone of all creation being born with a capacity of knowing and loving his Maker;
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man alone of all creation being gifted with a faculty of liberty and rationality, whereby, if he is so disposed, he can elevate his heart and soul to his Creator, and sing his praise; man alone is born with this capacity, and it is his Maker's care ever to keep him therein—ever to preserve inviolate his principles of rationality and liberty; at the same time it being his Maker's earnest desire, that he might so improve those mercies, as to raise himself above the level of the beasts, whose duration of life is confined to their natural existence—to raise himself above the state of mere animals and brutes, outsoar them, taste immortal and eternal joys, springing ever new from that love's fountain, in whose image and likeness he is created a form. This all might do without exception, would they but attend to wisdom's dictates, as laid down in the blessed Word; following the Lord in the regeneration, denying self, and the world, with all its filthy lusts,

It is to be lamented that so great a part of the human race appear otherwise disposed. We degrade ourselves below the brutes

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that perish, in an actual manner, and always by implication, when we act contrary to what is good and true. Where more is given, more is required. The faults the animal creation may commit, they know not they are in themselves faults; they never can abstain from them from that motive; because rationality is no part of their characteristic; whatever they do as from themselves, or as taught by men, they do by instinct. Man may at all times know what is evil: the Word in his hands, at all times declares to him his duty in all respects towards God and his neighbour; and if he had not that light, as some nations in the world have not, yet he might lay his hand upon his heart, and ask his conscience, and that will accuse or excuse him in every particular of his life, will he but attend to the faithful monitor within him. Herein is man's excellence; it is because of this that he has the natural power and dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. Man's excellence does not consist in lording it over the rest of the creation;

creation; in possessing a surpassing art and ingenuity to them, whereby he can have all under his feet—no—he derives his disparity from a nobler source; he derives it from a spiritual and celestial ground, without which, as may evidently appear, the other must be vain and trifling; was that the whole, it would not be worth the enjoyment. For wherein would his spiritual life be bettered? More probably, much the worse: yea, if he does not view his excellence from a higher ground, he is below a beast. It may make his heart callous and hard—cruel and intemperate—awake and call forth his lusts in the exercise of the natural dominion which he has over the rest of the creation. But would this exalt the man?—exalt his intrinsic character? Most surely not. It would level him at least in mind and heart with them, if not degrade him deeper. But still, although the man may thus depreciate his worthiness, his character, and noble birth; reduce himself, by following the dictates of his wild lusts and passions, beneath the creatures over whom he arrogates to himself the government; still let him know,

that that capability of being elevated above them, is never lost; and although it may not be manifest, whilst he is in the horrid exercise of his lawless concupiscence, still in his silent moments it will awake upon him, stare him in the face like a faithful preacher, tell him how he ought to have improved the talent, manifesting, were his eyes able to see, the real substantial good lost in the ways of sin; and even in the regions below, the same brutal life, the same punishment, the same remorse, consequent upon a man's acting contrary to light once received, follow close upon his heels; for there the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Our Lord in the parable declares the lot of those, who in time do not improve their talent, which constitutes their superiority over the beast; that at the day of retribution the talent will be taken from them, themselves bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness, where will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For although the life of the Lord is with them, supporting them in the capability of becoming rational, and to use their liberty, they by the abuse of those

those faculties, in time, have so confirmed themselves in evil delights, that, altho' they might use them, they will not. They chuse death rather than life, hell rather than heaven; hence the genuine state of the case is, they bind themselves hand and foot, and cast themselves into all kinds of falses from evils, which is the outer darkness, and all kinds of evils, with their attendant woes, which is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

Thus have I endeavoured to lay before you a few ideas, which appeared to result from the natural reading of the text; the spiritual sense of which is a spacious field indeed; and which I shall not, at this time, attempt to enlarge upon, contenting myself with only just opening it in a general way.

These words of our text, as well as the whole first chapter of Genesis, relate to the most ancient church, or to the inhabitants of our earth, which existed before the flood. To this church the Lord appeared as a man; talked with them face to face; their care was all swallowed up in him; hence they called

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no one MAN (Adam) but the Lord himself, and the things which were of the Lord; neither did they call themselves MAN (Adam), but only those things in themselves which they perceived they had from the Lord, as was all their good of love, and all their truth of faith. It is from the same ground that by Man, and by the Son of Man, in the prophets, in a supreme sense, is meant the Lord himself; in an inferior sense, the wisdom and intelligence which is derived from him, from whence MAN (Adam), in the Word, signifies one who is regenerate.

With respect to an image and a likeness of the Lord, we are to understand, that every man is governed by angels and spirits from the Lord. Whilst man remaineth unregenerate, evil spirits are with him from hell, who rule over him in such a manner, that though the angels of heaven are present, still they can effect nothing to any purpose for the man's eternal welfare, but only to avert, as much as possible, the evil influence from hell. But when he is regenerate, then the good angels have the dominion, and inspire

spire the willing mind with whatever is good and true, at the same time infusing a dread and fear of what is evil and false.

The angels indeed guide, and thus minister to the heirs of salvation; but herein they only minister from the Lord, who alone governeth man, by angels and spirits; and because such government, in regeneration, is effected by means of angels and spirits, therefore it is here at first said, Let us make man in our image; but inasmuch as the Lord alone really governeth and disposeth, therefore it is said in the following verse, that God created man in his own image; the spiritual part of man, which is the intellectual principle, and the man spiritually regenerated, that is, the man whose mind is receptive of truth for the sake of truth, and for the sake of life, being what is to be understood by the image; and the celestial part of man, which is his will principle, so also the celestial man, the man who is swallowed up entirely in love to the Lord, being what is meant by a likeness.

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When we come to speak, in the spiritual sense, to the dominion which man is permitted to exercise over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; we are to understand, that all beasts, fowls, fish, &c. are produced by man's affections, and the ideas from those affections; consequently they correspond, and they represent those affections, and those ideas. Hence the point is brought to this issue, that it is not the creatures without, but the affections and ideas within, represented by them, that we are to endeavour to gain the dominion over. To complete this conquest, is the whole of the spiritual warfare. This is fighting, not only against flesh and blood, but also against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places, within our evil and depraved hearts and minds.

The present opportunity will not permit going on any farther, in the particulars now revealed from the Lord, of the spiritual sense
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of this passage. I shall therefore conclude with drawing the following inferences.

1. May we not see clearly the one God, in whom is contained the divine trinity of esse, existence, and operation, or Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, even in those passages of the Word, which from false doctrine heretofore have been held up, as confirming proofs of three distinct and separate Gods? The reason was, because false lights were held out to the mind; and not the true God that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world; even the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, of whom all the Scriptures treat, and concerning whom they alone testify.

2. We may further see, for what end we are created; namely, to become images and likenesses of the Lord; and that we may not want a pattern, he himself has set us an example, whilst tabernacling in our nature here below, of self-denial, patience, love, pity, and compassion; that we might follow his footsteps, and thus gain the victory over

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our natural evil affections, and our erroneous and false ideas thence resulting, whereby heaven commences, and is established in the soul, whilst we grow more and more meet for the inheritance of the glory that is to be revealed above, in the light and love of the sun of righteousness, when we have laid aside our mortal coverings, and entered upon our eternal state.

Finally, let the man, who is misusing his talents, with shame think how he degrades his nature, when he does not act up to his character; for let us one and all remember, we are called to be nothing less than the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty, and heirs of the inheritance above.

Now to our Lord Jesus Christ be glory and dominion for ever and ever,

END OF SERMON I.

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